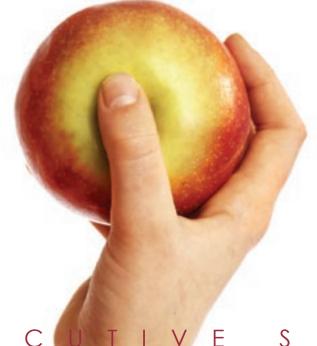
CREATING A

HUNGER FREE

NORTH DAKOTA 2008



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

HUNGER IN THE HEARTLAND

orth Dakota's charitable feeding network is as strong and diverse as the people and programs that comprise it. For 1 in 12 North Dakotans, this network is the difference between having food on the table and going hungry.

Unfortunately, demand for emergency food assistance is growing faster than available resources, and the charitable feeding network has not fully kept pace with changing trends and client demographics. Critical areas of concern include:

- Decreasing donations of shelf-stable food that have been the mainstay of North Dakota feeding programs.
- Deeper and longer-term needs among food shelf users.
- Challenges of providing services in sparsely populated and often declining rural areas.
- Elderly volunteers running programs with no succession plans in place.
- Growing numbers of both working poor and seniors seeking services.
- Increasing costs for transportation.
- Lack of adequate facilities, equipment and funding to meet expanding needs and changing food donation patterns.

At the same time, there are many emerging opportunities to enhance charitable feeding efforts including:

- Growing donations of both food and nonfood products not traditionally distributed by emergency food providers.
- Initiating new methods of delivering services in under-served areas or to targeted populations.
- Heightening cooperation and collaboration among hunger-relief partners.
- Providing education and training for both providers and clients of the network.

In order to better meet the needs of people living in North Dakota, we must first have a clear picture of the existing environment. To that end, *Creating a Hunger Free North Dakota* 2008, the first ever study of the statewide charitable feeding network, provides an indepth look at both the existing levels of service and the potential for increased capacity among current and potential providers.

Creating a Hunger Free North Dakota 2008 provides authoritative, comprehensive and statistically valid data on the state's charitable response to individuals and families living with food insecurity. It identifies unmet client needs, geographical gaps in service delivery, constraints faced by providers, barriers to accessing service experienced by clients, emerging trends, and opportunities for strengthened partnerships to expand services and enhance the network.



METHODOLOGY

Creating a Hunger Free North Dakota 2008 included a series of statewide provider and client focus groups, a post card survey completed by more than 1,800 client households and a questionnaire distributed to all existing emergency providers offering service within the network. Statistical data was also collected from the Great Plains Food Bank, North Dakota Community Action Programs, the State of North Dakota, America's Second Harvest, U.S. Department of Agriculture and the U.S. Census Bureau. Complete details about the methodology are available in the full report which can be accessed at www.lssnd.org/GreatPlainsFoodBank.

use the charitable feeding network – 40% are children

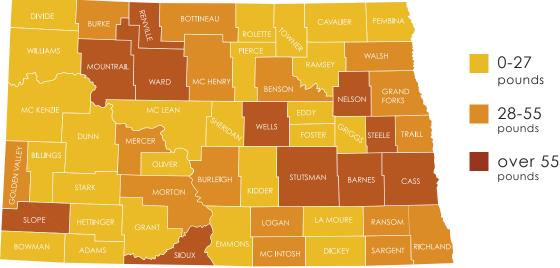
North Dakota Charitable Feeding Network:

A group of nonprofit emergency food providers (i.e. soup kitchens, shelter feeding programs, food pantries) that give food to individual clients and households living with or at risk of hunger. This network is supplied with food by the Great Plains Food Bank, which receives donated surplus product from the food industry; and Community Action Programs, which receive USDA commodities through the state.

Significant portions of North Dakota are under-served by the charitable feeding network

- 52 out of 53 counties have charitable feeding programs, but 28 counties are served by just a single provider.
- 43% of providers serve a radius of 40 miles or more.
- Although the state's charitable feeding network as a whole provides slightly more food per person in poverty (111%) compared to the national average, 29 out of 53 counties remain under-served.*
- Bringing all counties up to minimum service levels would require a relatively small increase in food provided (6%); meeting full service levels would require a 30% increase; while creating a hunger-free North Dakota would require almost doubling the current food resources to 9.1 million pounds.

POUNDS OF FOOD DISTRIBUTED PER PERSON IN NEED



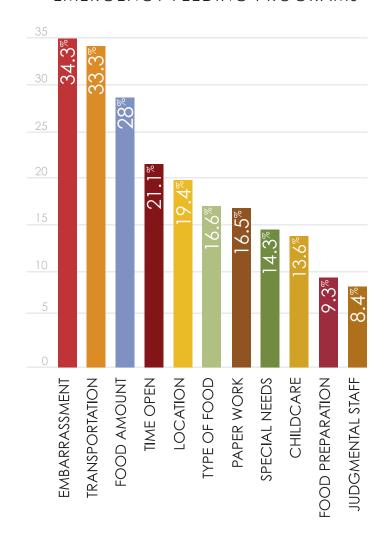
Pounds of food divided by low income population needing assistance

^{*} Providing less than 50% of the statewide average amount of food to, or serving less than 50% of, low income population needing assistance. The statewide average equals 55 pounds.

Clients encounter barriers in accessing the network

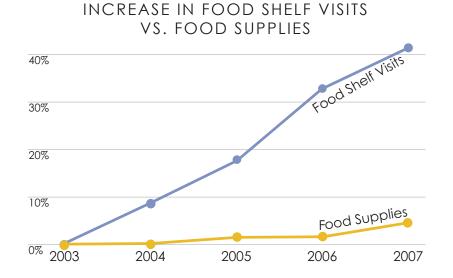
- Clients identified the top three barriers to using emergency feeding programs as 1) personal embarrassment, 2) transportation challenges and 3) the amount of food received not meeting the family's needs.
- Access issues prevent client usage: 78% of providers are only open during weekday business hours; 50% are not open on a regular (daily/weekly) basis; and 20% are open 4 times a year or less.
- Most providers believe that people are aware of their program, but clients indicate they remain unfamiliar with local programs and services. Although a variety of ways were reported, 84% of providers depend on word of mouth advertising, just 20% post their contact numbers, and only 28% are listed in the phone book.
- Clients participating in statewide focus groups reported that their tightly stretched budgets forced them to seek assistance from emergency feeding programs: 83% declared that the food they bought didn't last and they didn't have money to get more; 76% couldn't afford to eat balanced meals; and 56% noted that they ate less than they should because there wasn't enough money.

BARRIERS TO UTILIZING EMERGENCY FEEDING PROGRAMS



Providers are strained by increased demand and limited resources

- Data counts from providers show that food shelf visits have increased by 42% over the last five years, while food supplies have only grown by 5%. More than 35% of providers report having insufficient food supplies to meet client needs.
- 55% of providers state that clients are using their services more often. Clients confirm this of those that used an emergency feeding program during the last 12 months, 53% stated they used these programs 4 or more times.
- Almost 30% report inadequate technology, funding and refrigeration capacity. 38% cite insufficient funding as a threat to the continued operation of their program.
- 20% report staffing and volunteer shortages. More than 50% of pantries are run by volunteers, many of whom are elderly, with no paid employees.



TOP THREE REASONS PROVIDERS REPORT MORE CLIENTS USING SERVICES



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Providers expand and adapt their services to meet client needs

"If it weren't for the food pantry, we don't know what we'd do. We are so grateful."

-Clients seeking emergency food assistance

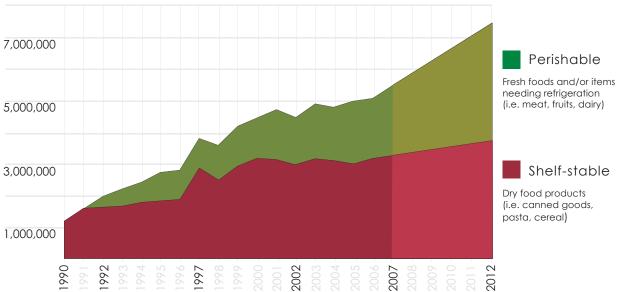
- 44% of providers are offering some sort of home delivery service despite rising transportation costs.
- 38% have transitioned to the Client Choice model, giving clients the opportunity to choose their food.
- 31% conduct client satisfaction surveys and another 20% are interested in developing a survey.
- 20% supplement their supply of shelf-stable food items by offering clients vouchers to purchase meat, produce and perishables.
- Providers are interested in offering more services if resources are available: 46% are interested in supplying recipes; 33% in providing nutrition education; and 22% in offering referrals to other local services.



Sources and types of food utilized by the network are in major transition

- The supply of shelf-stable product traditionally utilized by charitable feeding programs is declining due to increased efficiencies within the food industry and shrinking amounts of government commodities.
- Donations of perishable food have grown by more than 50% since 2002 and are projected to grow at almost three times the pace of shelf-stable products over the next five years.
- Almost 70% of charitable feeding programs are interested in increasing distribution of perishable foods to supplement other food resources as demand for service grows.

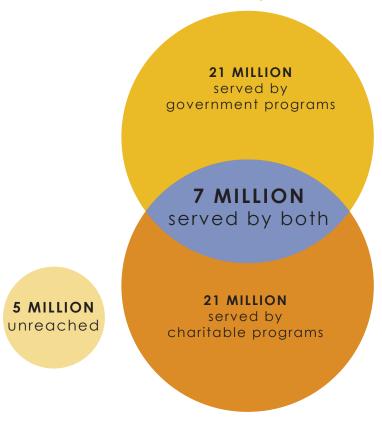




Source: Great Plains Food Bank

Opportunity exists for heightened collaboration between the charitable feeding network and federal nutrition programs

FOOD INSECURE INDIVIDUALS
REACHED BY FOOD
ASSISTANCE SOURCE, 2004



- Only one-third of food insecure households that use charitable feeding programs also receive support from federal nutrition programs.
- 57% of eligible Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP - formerly known as Food Stamps) participants in North Dakota receive benefits (2005). Studies indicate that 46% of those eligible, but not receiving benefits, could be persuaded to apply if offered support.
- 17% of providers currently offer SNAP outreach, and an additional 19% are interested in providing this service.
- Counties under-served by the charitable feeding network are also often the least well served by federal nutrition programs.

Source: Household Food Security in the U.S. 2004 based on Dec. 2004 CPS Food Security survey; A2H Hunger in America 2006; U.S. Conference of Mayors Hunger & Homelessness; Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration; U.S. Census Bureau Survey (Dec. 2005); Boston Consulting Group analysis

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orth Dakota has a strong and viable charitable feeding network and clients are very appreciative of the support they receive, however, significant gaps in service and access to emergency feeding programs remain a challenge.

The need for emergency food assistance is on the rise and providers are feeling the pressure. Providers will need increased support and additional resources to meet this demand. As donations of shelf-stable products traditionally utilized by the network further decline, dependence on perishable food products will continue to increase. This changing mix of product will require the charitable feeding system in North Dakota to significantly modify its service delivery model. The network is resilient however, and providers express a continued desire to expand their capacity and extend their reach to ensure the needs of children, seniors and working families are met.

Ending hunger in North Dakota is a shared responsibility that goes beyond the charitable sector. By strengthening the connection between the charitable feeding network and federal nutrition programs we can make a much greater impact on the lives of those experiencing food insecurity.

RECOMMENDATIONS

ELIMINATE GAPS IN SERVICE

- Dismantle existing network barriers that impede client access.
- Develop innovative service delivery models that will extend our reach into un-served or under-served communities.
- Secure alternative food resources and embrace changing food trends that offer highly desirable, yet challenging perishable product.

BUILD CHARITABLE FEEDING NETWORK CAPACITY

- Provide training, support and resources to existing providers in order to meet increasing needs and minimize threats to continuing operations.
- Establish new service providers in un-served and under-served areas of the state.
- Mobilize communities to support network operations and engage in hunger-relief activities.

FORTIFY NORTH DAKOTA'S EMERGENCY FOOD ASSISTANCE SYSTEM

- Explore the depth of food insecurity in North Dakota and its impact on key populations.
- Increase alignment between the charitable feeding network and federal nutrition programs.
- Transition from working as a network, to functioning more as a system united behind our common vision of a hunger-free North Dakota.

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"We need to create and nurture a sense of community about hunger. Everyone in the community needs to see the value of being a part of the solution." -Emergency food provider

CALL TO ACTION

Now that we have a clear picture of the environment the charitable feeding network and the clients who access this network are operating in, it's time to take action. As Creating a Hunger Free North Dakota moves into phase two, additional partners are invited to the table. Partners will work together to carry out viable actions identified as a result of this study including:

Establish a mobile food pantry program.

Develop a prepackaged food basket program.

Explore the viability of Kids Cafes and/or School Back Pack programs.

Initiate a retail store pick-up program.

Expand rural food delivery service.

Replicate perishable food recovery programs in metropolitan areas.

Build the charitable feeding network by engaging new partners.

Secure new sources of food.

Strengthen provider network by offering technical assistance and support.

Lift up current food pantry best practices.

Formalize regional provider training and networking opportunities.

Advocate for strong federal nutrition programs.

Conduct an in-depth assessment of hunger in North Dakota.

Increase SNAP participation through education and outreach.

Implement a hunger awareness campaign.

Create a statewide Task Force on Hunger.

TOGETHER WE ARE CREATING A HUNGER FREE NORTH DAKOTA! To become a partner in this vision, contact CHFND@Issnd.org or call (701) 476-9101.











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We extend our thanks to those who shared their personal experiences with hunger, and to those who offer their support through emergency food assistance.

June 2008: Please credit Creating a Hunger Free North Dakota 2008 as the source of data whenever material from this report is shared.

